

Tape 27
Side A, 0- 1/2

27 AUG 1979

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MEMORANDUM FOR:



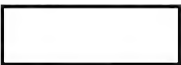
FROM:

DCI

SUBJECT:

LA COS Conference

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1. The Latin America Chiefs of Station are coming back for their annual conference  We've had some very strong expressions of opinion from our Central American Chiefs, and understandably so. I think understanding what our Stations were saying, ^{and} what we as an Agency said in the SCC and PRC councils, ^{and} what the US Government did is important to me and to these Chiefs of Station.

2. In preparation for my meeting with the ^eChiefs, I'd like to try to pull together a picture of what their reporting was and what our reporting ^{to} ~~in~~ the community was. I'd like to better be able to answer their complaints that ^{we} ~~that~~ ^{not} ~~apparently~~ were [^]listened to or that we were hobbled by a lack of covert action. In short, will you digest their principal letters and messages and help prepare me for a two-front discussion with them:

a. What the state of affairs in Central America is, where US policy is

~~and CIA~~ taking us and what role the Agency is going to play.

b. What ^{the} ~~example~~ ^{of} ~~events~~ ^{around Nicaragua} mean for us as intelligence professionals.

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Junketing legislators disrupt US diplomats

By Frederic A. Moritz
Staff correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

Hong Kong

Visiting congressmen, other US politicians, and other delegations are seriously hampering America's intelligence gathering capacity on crucial areas such as China, Vietnam, and other parts of the world.

A constant flow of official visitors to US embassies and consulates in Peking, Bangkok, and Hong Kong is interfering with daily reporting and long-term analysis by foreign service officers assigned to areas ranging from Chinese economic policy to China's tense and volatile relations with Vietnam.

According to one estimate, the small and already strained American Embassy reporting staff in Peking is able to spend only 50 percent of its time on reporting and analysis because of the constant flow of visitors.

This situation is especially serious because of growing indications that tension between China and Vietnam is rising. Adequate time for reporting and analysis is essential if American diplomats are to assess accurately the likelihood of a second Chinese military "lesson" against Vietnam, according to some observers.

To some extent Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analysts working in US embassies and consulates can backstop overworked foreign service officers harassed with the duties of briefing, escorting, and otherwise tending visiting dignitaries. But some observers close to US Government circles say the CIA information is either too minute and detailed or too long-range to substitute for

the kind of material ordinarily supplied by the Foreign Service.

Foreign Service officers themselves cautiously refuse to discuss the problem openly with journalists. But reliable sources in close contact with American diplomats say there is deep concern over the problem.

This month, for example, nine members of a US congressional delegation headed by Rep. Benjamin S. Rosenthal arrived in Hong Kong before leaving for Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Another delegation of about a dozen members of the US House, led by Rep. Lester L. Wolff (D) of New York, chairman of the Asian and Pacific affairs subcommittee, arrived in Hong Kong Aug. 7 before proceeding to Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and the Soviet Union. On Aug. 10 another delegation, led by Rep. Charles H. Wilson (D) of California, chairman of the subcommittee on postal operations and services, will arrive in Hong Kong before proceeding to Thailand and Singapore.

On Aug. 14 still another delegation, led by Rep. Joel Pritchard (R) of Washington is scheduled to arrive in Hong Kong before leaving for Southeast Asia. And on Sept. 1, Vice-President Walter Mondale arrives in Hong Kong after a visit to Peking. In September the parade of congressional visitors will abate temporarily because the House returns to session.

Diplomats here recognize the importance of briefing qualified congressmen and officials who need information to make wise decisions. But the visits cause constant disruptions going far beyond time taken in briefings. Hotel reservations must be made, and visitors shepherded through customs. Visiting congressmen expect to be met by Foreign Service officers and escorted in the appropriate car. State Department hosts provide everything from a message and packaging service to booklets and personal advice on where

to get the best "buys" in cameras and jewelry.

"The diplomats do not mind providing information, but they do not want to be constant baby sitters," notes one observer.

One result is that Foreign Service analysts have little time left for in-depth analysis.

"I know of one study that could have been done in a few weeks, but now it has taken a couple of months," said one source, who noted the analyst has been interrupted every three to four days.

"The State Department would like to have incisive studies with a broad overview. But the diplomats here say they frankly do not have the time," he added.

One result has been an inadequate flow of information and analysis from the US Embassy in Peking for processing by the US Consulate in Hong Kong. Ideally information from Chinese officials in Peking is combined and analyzed in Hong Kong in the context of information available from left-wing and other sources here. But the flow of visitors is preventing this from happening, says one source.

According to observers, the reason for the problem is that the State Department has no political constituency to back it in Congress. Thus it must do everything it can to please congressional visitors lest Congress cut its budget.

Some obvious solutions would be for visiting officials to expect less from their hosts; for Congress to appropriate more money so that the State Department could hire local staff for "baby-sitting" chores; and for congressmen to use their own staffs, rather than State Department officials, to make trip arrangements.

"Most diplomats would like to see some of these changes, but they ask, 'Who is willing to listen?'" comments one source close to the scene.